

Nixon challenges Cox in mayor's race

By MIKE McLAUGHLIN
Incumbent Bill Cox must ward off a challenge from a retired civic leader in seeking a third term as mayor of the town of Hertford.

Herbert N. Nixon, 66, will oppose Cox in the municipal election slated Nov. 6.

Voters will apparently face a choice between a candidate who has a great deal of experience in political and civic leadership, and one who has made significant contributions in the civic arena.

The sole issue in the race thus far appears to be whether or not Cox holds conflicting offices in town government.

While Nixon was careful not to criticize Cox's tenure as mayor, he said that he does not feel that Cox, who also serves as town manager, should be allowed to wear the hats of both offices.

"I think the mayor's job, which is an elected job, should be divorced from the city manager's job," Nixon said.

He said that Cox holds every supervisory job in Hertford Town government and questioned the wisdom of having one man in charge of everything.

In addition, Nixon said that if he were elected mayor, Cox's work load would be eased, and he would have

more time to devote to town management.

"Bill is a friend of mine and I'm in no way critical of him," Nixon added.

Cox, on the other hand, argued that the fact that he is mayor has helped him in managing the town. "The contacts I've made as mayor have enabled me to do a better job as town manager," Cox said.

Special legislation passed during the 1975 General Assembly gave the Hertford Town Council the authority to hire Cox as full time town manager while serving as mayor.

As an elected official, he has

a vote on the town council, except in those matters pertaining to the town manager's office.

The two candidates come closer to agreement on the subject of growth.

Both say they will support efforts to attract new industry to Hertford. Nixon said that he would like to see the historical flavor of the town promoted for tourism purposes.

"We've got more old houses in this county than any county in North Carolina," Nixon said.

Nixon has never held public office before, though he has many civic contributions to boast of.

Cox, however, has his eight year record as mayor to fall back on. He has also served for four years on the town council.

Though he spreads the credit between himself and the town council, Cox can produce a long list of accomplishments that have taken place during his tenure as mayor.

The town has received more than \$1 million in state and federal grants in the last eight years, including \$270,000 for water and sewer, \$400,000 for urban renewal, and \$140,000 for a waterfront park.

Cox has also served on various state, regional and

local committees, and chaired the committee which worked to achieve the Governor's Community of Excellence Award.

Cox outlined several goals he would like to see accomplished if he were elected to a third term as mayor.

These included the continued improvement of town services, keeping VEPCO electricity rates in line, keeping property taxes at their present level, and taking a close look at all town expenditures.

Nixon said he sees the office of mayor as primarily a "meeting and greeting" type job with the town manager responsible for the nuts and



Bill Cox



Herbert Nixon

bolts of daily operations.

His involvement with civic affairs includes 35 years of service with the Hertford Volunteer Fire Department, two terms as president of the local Red Cross, and active

participation in the Perquimans County Historical Society.

"What I've done in the past shows that I'm interested in this county and town," Nixon said.

Funding search to begin soon

The Tri-County Career Education Center Steering Committee is in the final stages of preparation for a funding search to find financial backing for an advanced academic and vocational center that would serve Gates, Chowan and Perquimans Counties.

At a Thursday night meeting, the committee voted to incorporate the tri-county center. This would make contributions from private sources to the center fund tax deductible.

The committee also voted to begin a search for architectural planning assistance in designing a facility that would complement the center curriculum.

According to center director Kenneth Stallings, assistance is needed in drawing up a schematic floor plan that would determine the square footage requirements for each of the programs to be offered, and in providing some idea of the cost of constructing the facility.

This information can then be shared with potential funding sources that might have an interest in the career center concept.

The career center idea was born out of an interest in combining the resources of the three counties. Combining resources may prove to be a way of providing advanced vocational and academic courses that would not otherwise be available to high

school students in the area.

Stallings said that if everything goes as planned, the center may become a reality by 1981.

"By next year at this time our goal is to have identified a site for the facility, completed the final development of curriculum offering, completed the design of the facility to complement the curriculum, and to have put together a funding package to support it," Stallings said.

If these goals are met the committee will be ready to let bids for the construction of the facility by next fall.

Stallings conceded, however, that it might be difficult to find sufficient funding for the center's construction. "Brick and mortar money is the hardest kind to get," he said.

The cost of constructing the facility has been projected at from \$3.5 to \$4 million, far out of the reach of the three counties, and probably more than any one single foundation is going to be willing to contribute.

"Support is going to have to come from several sources to make it fly," Stallings said.

The fact that the counties are sparsely populated and isolated, however, may work to the committee's advantage in the search for funds.

"A lot of foundations write into their priorities that they would like to go into rural,

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Harvest time

John Lane sells autumn produce at his stand on U.S. 17 south. His collection of dried corn and pumpkins hints that

Halloween is just around the corner. (Photo by Noel Todd-McLaughlin)

Hertford, Winfall get road money

RALEIGH — State Transportation Secretary Tom Bradshaw announced recently that checks totaling more than \$34.6 million have been mailed to 457 municipalities in North Carolina for local street construction and maintenance. The monies make up the 1979 allocation of state street aid (Powell Bill) funds.

The municipality of Hertford received \$26,023 in Powell

bill funds. This allocation is based on the community's population of 1,930 and its 9.61 miles of local streets.

The town of Winfall, with 550 residents, received \$7,605 for its three miles of local streets.

Each year the Powell Bill returns to qualified municipalities one cent of North Carolina's motor fuel tax and requires that these

funds be disbursed by no later than Oct. 1.

"Sharing these resources is another example of our partnership with the communities we serve in our joint effort to meet transportation needs locally as well as statewide," said Bradshaw.

"This year's sum is the largest amount ever returned to North Carolina communities under the Powell Bill

provisions. In fact, it's more than \$1.1 million more than last year's record disbursement," he said.

For this year's Powell Bill funds, the largest check went to the city of Charlotte. Charlotte's allocation of \$4,155,095.25 was based on a population of 338,250 and a local street mileage figure of 1,124.37.

County seeks water money

Perquimans County is applying for more than \$1 million in grants and loans to complete Phase II of its water system. When completed, Phase II is expected to serve between 85 and 90 per cent of the county's potential water customers.

The board of commissioners approved the move to seek funding at a Monday night meeting. The county is seeking a loan from the Farm Home Administration, and state grants, both in the vicinity of a half million dollars, to finance the project.

The county would also be required to chip in \$4,575 in local funds, but this would be generated through user sign-up fees.

Commission chairman Joe Nowell said that it is a virtual certainty that the project will be financed, but it may be as long as nine months before the money comes through.

The county water system became active in June of 1978 and currently serves some 1600 customers.

In a related matter, the commissioners were told that the county's dirty water problem had been cleaned up.

Wayne Floyd, a representative of the firm that engineered the system, said a maladjustment in the sequence of events at the water plant had been causing iron ore-laden water to run into the homes of some county residents.

"The water problem is pretty much cured," Floyd said.

In other action, the commissioners accepted a \$7,900 Coastal Area Management Act grant to update its land use plan.

The plan, required under CAMA, will be drawn up using a process of public participation.

There was, however, some discontent expressed among board members that the land use requirement is restricted to a few coastal counties.

"I want to see the rest of the counties have to do the same thing," said commissioner Lester Simpson. "They pick out a few counties and shove it down their throats."

Noting that the plan is mandated by the state, however, Simpson made a motion that the grant be accepted, and the board voted unanimously to do so.

County treasurer Durwood Reid told the board that he has been warned once again by auditors about the lack of internal controls in the water-tax department.

Reid said that money taken in by the joint department could easily be mishandled before being deposited.

"It's not being questioned because of anything they've found, but because of the tremendous possibility," Reid said.

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Crushed stone truck

A wrecker prepares to haul away a dump truck nearly destroyed in an accident Wednesday morning. Owner-operator Eddie Yarrell was on his way back to Greenville after delivering a load of crushed stone to the department of

transportation shop in Winfall when he struck the rear of another truck, forcing it into a car. (Photo by Mike McLaughlin)

Accidents mar weekend

"They come in bunches" was Highway Patrolman Y.Z. Newberry's explanation of a phenomenon that saw nine different vehicles involved in serious auto accidents occurring between Wednesday morning of last week and the wee hours of Sunday morning.

The wreck that most typified the weekend came when a 1977 Datsun crashed into a line of traffic waiting for another wreck to be cleared from U.S. 17.

Dwayne Craig Hinton, Of Belvidere, was charged with failure to reduce speed to avoid an accident and driving under the influence of alcohol after his automobile plowed into the rear of a 1978 Dodge van driven by Jerry Edward Vaughn, of Rt. 1, Hertford early Saturday morning.

Investigating officer Newberry estimated damage to the Datsun at \$3,000, a total loss. Damage to the van was in the neighborhood of \$400, he said.

Both men received minor injuries in the crash, Newberry said.

Vaughn was among motorists waiting for a tractor trailer rig to be uprighted that had tilted into the ditch following a scrape with a pickup truck at 6:05p.m. on Saturday.

According to Newberry, a 1976 Dodge pickup driven by Walter Francis McNary, of Rt. 3, Elizabeth City, and a 1978 Ford tractor-trailer rig, driven by George Barnes of Jacksonville, Fla., were following a slow moving vehicle south on U.S. 17.

The tractor-trailer pulled out to pass both the pickup and the other vehicle. When the semi-rig pulled along side the pickup, it too elected to pass and swerved into the left hand lane, striking the tractor trailer and forcing it into the ditch.

The tractor-trailer turned over on its side and traffic remained blocked until 3:30 a.m. as three wreckers struggled to upright the vehicle.

Damage to the tractor-trailer was estimated at \$10,000, while the pickup

suffered an estimated \$100 damage.

McNary was charged in the accident with failing to see before turning from a direct line that such movement could be done in safety.

The string of accidents began on U.S. 17 Wednesday morning when a dump truck struck the rear of another dump truck and knocked it into a car.

Reginald Overton of Rt. 3, Hertford stopped his car to make left turn some six miles south of Hertford.

Overton was followed by a

dump truck which stopped in time to avoid him. But a second dump truck, driven by Eddie Gene Yarrell of Greenville, smashed into the rear of the truck, and the impact forced it into Overton's automobile.

Highway Patrolman Charles Mims charged Yarrell with failure to reduce speed to avoid an accident. His truck received an estimated \$12,000 in damages in the crash.

The dump truck struck in

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Smoke testing begins

William Freeman and Associates has begun smoke testing of the town sewer system to determine where groundwater and other extraneous flow might be leaking into the system.

Sections of the system will be blocked off and filled with smoke to determine if there are any leaks.

A spokesman for the

company said that if the service connection underneath a house is faulty, smoke might be observed coming from beneath the house.

If the homeowner sees smoke coming from underneath his house, he should contact the company or the town water and sewer department, rather than the fire department, he said.